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RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J2 SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 002405

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E.O. 12958: DECL: FIVE YEARS AFTER KOREAN UNIFICATION
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S JULY 14 MEETING WITH NA SPEAKER LIM
CHAE-JUNG

Classified By: AMB. ALEXANDER VERSHBOW. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) In a July 14 meeting with the Ambassador, ROK National Assembly Speaker Lim Chae-jung said that he was upset with the DPRK and hoped to work with the U.S. to find a unified response to the post-missile-launch situation. He agreed that a UN resolution was the next step but said Chapter 7 language was unacceptable. Speaker Lim noted the FTA was of key interest to the National Assembly and he was optimistic that a well negotiated KORUS FTA would pass the Korean National Assembly. END SUMMARY

FTA

¶2. (C) Ambassador Vershbow noted that he valued his role as liaison with the National Assembly (NA). He emphasized that while he did not agree with the protestors who were demonstrating against the FTA, he saw their activity as a healthy symbol of the strength of Korea's democracy. However, he noted that dialogue between opponents and proponents of an FTA was the key in both countries to coming up with a KORUS FTA acceptable to both the U.S. and Korea. Speaker Lim said he hoped the result of the FTA negotiations would be a signed agreement that would benefit both countries. He added the ROKG has consistently supported the FTA despite certain areas of concern.

¶3. (SBU) Speaker Lim explained the KORUS FTA had many areas that needed negotiation that reflected differences in opinion on how Korea should develop; but in the end, the ROKG and the NA would work together for a positive result. Ambassador Vershbow agreed that the process was about narrowing the differences in opinion between the two countries on the sensitive issues. He added that it was important to come to an agreement acceptable to both sides so that it could pass both countries, respective legislative bodies.

VWP

¶4. (SBU) The Ambassador said he hoped to see the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) implemented soon. Although much work was left to be done, he was optimistic. Speaker Lim heartily agreed

that the VWP would help U.S.-ROK relations immensely.

MISSILE RESPONSE AND THE ROAD TO AN OPEN DPRK

15. (C) Speaker Lim expressed strong disappointment with North Korea, and noted he did not "understand the missile tests and could not accept the tests". He declared the DPRK would not receive any compensation as a result of the launches. However, he said he could not agree with Japan's draft UNSC resolution, which include Chapter 7 language. He said while the ROK understood that Japan's proposal did not include the use of force, he argued that the resolution as drafted by Japan could lead to a more dangerous future with worrisome implications for South Korean sovereignty. He conceded that there should be a unified voice with the UN resolution, but that it should not include language about Chapter 7.

16. (SBU) Ambassador Vershbow said one of his goals was to contribute toward an opening of North Korea. Speaker Lim said that it was important to note that most countries open not due to outside pressure, but to the help of neighboring countries. He said the ROK is trying to help North Korea develop through aid and support. The two agreed the U.S. and ROK have the same goal: an open, non-nuclear DPRK, but had different ideas about how the goals should be achieved.

SOLVING THE NORTH KOREA PROBLEM

17. (C) The Ambassador said the North Korea problem had to be solved through the leadership efforts of the U.S. and ROK. Speaker Lim agreed and said the ROK and the U.S. need to work together and think about the future of the Peninsula and

about a peaceful, reunified Korea. The Ambassador agreed and said the U.S. and the ROK should work together on a strategy for the Six Party Talks and implementing the September 19 Joint Statement.

18. (C) Speaker Lim said he was heartened by President Bush's forthright statement in favor of finding a solution to the DPRK problem through diplomacy. He asked that the U.S. remember that if force were used, the ROK would be the country that suffered the most. Ambassador Vershbow said he understood the immediacy of the threat as I live in Seoul and feel how close we are to North Korea.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

19. (SBU) Speaker Lim noted he did not expect a change in the Constitution during his term as Speaker despite thinking the Constitution needed to be changed (to permit two four-year terms for the President rather than one five-year term). Rather, he said he would work to prepare the country for the changes that should come in the future. He concluded that the Constitution should be changed only when there is broad public consensus after healthy debate. He cautioned that in the past the Constitution had been reformed for short-term political goals rather than for the future of the Korean people, and vowed that would not happen again.

VERSHBOW